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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Florida's Saint Petersburg Junior College (SPJC) to determine employers' perceptions of SPJC graduates' technical and performance skills and to identify employers who might be available to participate in college programs or provide opportunities for student training or placement. Surveys were mailed to 146 businesses employing graduates from 1994-95 who were working in jobs related to their field of study and who had given consent. Study findings, based on completed surveys received from 92 employers, included the following: (1) the most highly rated skill area was graduates' possession of basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills, rated as excellent or very good by 89.1% of employers; (2) 85.7% rated graduates' ability to choose ethical courses of action as excellent or very good; (3) 82.6% rated the graduates' ability work with individuals from diverse backgrounds as excellent or very good; (4) 97.8% of employers indicated they would hire another SPJC graduate; (5) 94.4% of the graduates were reported by employers as earning $7.50 per hour or more, thus qualifying SPJC for state Performance Based Incentive Funding; and (6) 69.2% indicated a willingness to participate with the college on varying levels of activity, while the activity most often cited was placing students. The survey instrument and a table of employer ratings are appended. (HAA)

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ED 403 000

EMPLOYER SURVEY

1994-95

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EMPLOYER SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Employer satisfaction with St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC) graduates is a critical component of the strategic planning process at the institution. Accordingly, the Institutional Assessment Group developed an "Employer Survey" designed to measure employer satisfaction with their preparation for work. Specifically, the purposes of the survey were:

- to attain insight into employer perceptions regarding technical and performance skill of SPJC graduates,
- to gain information to supplement college data for Performance Based Incentive Funding, and
- to identify employers who might be available to participate with the college program activities or to provide opportunities for student training or placement.

Working students who graduated in the 1994-95 reporting year and who completed the "Recent Alumni Survey" identified the employers who would receive the survey. Employers were mailed an "Employer Survey" form if the students: indicated that their work was related to their studies, agreed that their employer could be contacted, and gave the name and address of the employer. One hundred forty-six businesses were contacted. There were 92 surveys returned for a response rate of 63.0%.

The highlights of the findings of the study are summarized below:

•Employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with graduate technical and performance skills. The skill areas with the highest levels of satisfaction, that is, those rated as either excellent or very good were (1) the graduate's possession of basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics (89.1%), (2) chooses ethical courses of action (85.7%), and (3) works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds (82.6%). More than two-thirds of the employers rated even the lowest skill areas as excellent or very good. These areas were (1) uses technology effectively (67.8%), and (2) identifies, organizes, plans and allocates resources (70.6%).

•Almost all employers (97.8%) indicated they would hire another SPJC graduate.

•In order for the College to qualify for Performance Based Incentive Funding, its graduates must either be working in a field related to their SPJC degree program or earning $7.50 per hour. The majority (94.4%) of SPJC graduates were reported by employers as earning $7.50 per hour or more.

•Over one-half of the employers indicated a willingness to participate with the College on varying levels of activity, with placement of students in co-op/internship rating highest at 69.2%.

•Employer-identified additional skills (or areas of knowledge the graduate should have to help them meet employer needs) were similar with the student perceptions in the "Recent Alumni Survey". This information was given to the program directors for their review.

In conclusion, both graduates (in the "Recent Alumni Survey") and employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with SPJC programs and training. Results from this survey confirmed the conclusions reached in the "Recent Alumni Survey" Report: A.S. degree and Postsecondary Certificate programs are achieving their intended objective of preparing students for work.

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INTRODUCTION

Employer satisfaction with St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC) graduates is a critical component of the strategic planning process at the institution. Accordingly, the Institutional Assessment Group developed an Employer Survey designed to measure employer satisfaction with the graduates preparation for work. Specifically, the purposes of the survey were:

- to attain insight into employer perceptions regarding technical and performance skill of SPJC graduates,
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FINDINGS

SPJC Graduate Technical and Performance

Employers were asked to rate nine (9) items related to employee competencies and foundation skills on a 10-point scale from Excellent (scale = 10-9) to Poor (scale = 2-1) or N/A meaning skills not required for this occupation. **Appendix A** contains the Employer Survey.

Table 1 shows the number responding to each item, the mean for each major employer choice, and the percentage for each major choice. Employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with SPJC graduate technical and performance skills. The skill areas with the highest levels of satisfaction, that is, those rated as either excellent or very good were (1) the graduate's possession of basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics (89.1%), (2) chooses ethical courses of action (85.7%), and (3) works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds (82.6%). More than two-thirds of the employers rated even the lowest skill areas as excellent or very good. These areas were (1) uses technology effectively (67.8%), and (2) identifies, organizes, plans and allocates resources (70.6%). Means based on employer ratings were calculated for each item. The highest mean, 8.5, was calculated for the item "Possesses basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics;" the lowest mean, 6.8, for "Uses technology, e.g., computers effectively." **Appendix B**, Employers Survey Overall Ratings of Technical and Performance Skills, shows the number and percentage for each value of choices.

Finally, employers were asked if they would hire another graduate from SPJC. Eighty-eight (88) of 90 employers (97.8%) who responded indicated they would hire another SPJC graduate. Only 2 employers (2.2%) indicated they would not hire another graduate of SPJC.

Performance Based Incentive Funding

In order to qualify for Performance Based Incentive Funding, the College must show that the graduate is either working in a field related to their SPJC degree program or earning $7.50 per hour. Job titles were obtained from respondents to the Recent Alumni Survey. Information about wages was obtained in both the Recent Alumni and Employer Surveys. On the Employer Survey, 90 employers answered the question, "Is the graduate's current hourly wage $7.50 or more?". The majority (94.4%) indicated that this was true; only 5.6% indicated that the graduate's current hourly wage was not $7.50 or more. This was consistent with the information provided by the graduates in the Recent Alumni Survey.

TABLE 1. Employers Satisfaction Ratings of SPJC Graduate Technical and Performance Skills

Competencies and Foundation Skills	Excellent 10 9	Very Good 8 7	Good 6 5	Fair 4 3	Poor 2 1	N/A	Total Responses	Mean
Possesses basic skills of reading, etc.	52	30	9	1	-	-	92	
	56.5%	**32.6%**	**9.8%**	**1.1%**			**100.0%**	**8.5**
Uses critical thinking, problem solving, etc.	32	37	14	9	-	-	92	
	34.8%	**40.2%**	**15.2%**	**9.8%**			**100.0%**	**7.6**
Exhibits appropriate level of responsibility	38	35	10	9	-	-	92	
	41.3%	**38.0%**	**10.9%**	**9.8%**			**100.0%**	**7.9**
Chooses ethical courses of action	49	29	10	3	-	-	91	
	53.8%	**31.9%**	**11.0%**	**3.3%**			**100.0%**	**8.4**
Identifies, organizes and allocates resources	38	27	17	9	-	1	92	
	41.3%	**29.3%**	**18.5%**	**9.8%**		**1.1%**	**100.0%**	**7.5**
Participates as a team player	48	24	17	2	1	-	92	
	52.2%	**26.1%**	**18.5%**	**2.2%**	**1.1%**		**100.0%**	**8.2**
Works well w/individuals from diverse background	47	29	10	5	-	1	92	
	51.1%	**31.5%**	**10.9%**	**5.4%**		**1.1%**	**100.0%**	**8.2**
Acquires, interprets and uses information effectively	38	33	14	7	-	-	92	
	41.3%	**35.9%**	**15.2%**	**7.6%**	-		**100.0%**	**8.2**
Uses technology, e.g., computers, effectively	28	32	13	5	-	11	89	
	32.2%	**35.6%**	**14.4%**	**5.6%**		**12.2%**	**100.0%**	**6.8**

The last section of the survey inquired about employer participation with the college. **Table 2** lists the items asked and summarizes employer responses. Over one-half of the employers indicated a willingness to participate on some level with the college. Sixty-nine percent (69.0%) employers would be willing to help in the placement of students in co-op/internship area, 64.1% would participate in job placement of graduates, and 64.5% express their willingness to provide education/training for their workforce.

Table 2. Employers Participation

Employers willingness to participate in one of the following:	YES	NO	Total Respondents
Serve on an advisory committee	42	32	74
	56.8%	**43.2%**	**100.0%**
Placement of student in co-op/internship	54	24	78
	69.2%	**30.8%**	**100.0%**
Job placement of graduates	50	28	78
	64.1%	**35.9%**	**100.0%**
Participation in job fairs/other community events	39	38	77
	51.3%	**48.7%**	**100.0%**
To provide education/training for your workforce	49	27	76
	64.5%	**35.5%**	**100.0%**

Descriptions of the graduate's major job duties, responsibilities, skills and/or areas of knowledge the SPJC graduate should have to meet the employers need were provided by the employer and given to the appropriate directors for their review.

In conclusion, both graduates (in the Recent Alumni Survey) and employers indicated high levels of satisfaction with SPJC programs and training. Results from this survey confirmed the conclusions reached in the Recent Alumni Survey Report: A.S. degree and Postsecondary Certificate programs are achieving their intended objective of preparing students for work.

St. Petersburg Junior College
EMPLOYER SURVEY

Program Name:_____ Code:_____

Social Security No._____ Job Title:_____

Your cooperation is needed to make sure that our graduates are receiving both the specific technical training and foundation skills that are essential for good job performance.

Please rate the overall performance of the individual in the following technical/skill areas on the following 7-point scale:

Competencies and Foundation Skills	Excellent 7	6	5	4	3	2	Poor 1	NA (skills not required for this occupation)
1. Uses written and oral communication skills effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Possesses necessary mathematic skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Uses critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Exhibits an appropriate level of responsibility and self management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Chooses ethical courses of action	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Participates as a team player	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Acquires, interprets and uses information effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Possesses the ability to gain rapport with clients	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Uses technology effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. What are the graduate's major job duties and/or responsibilities?_____

_____

_____

_____

13. Is the graduate's current hourly wage $7.50 or more? ☐ Yes ☐ No

14. Would you hire another graduate from SPJC? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "No", why not? _____

_____

_____

15. Please specify any additional skills or areas of knowledge in their field you believe the SPJC graduate should have (but does not have) to meet your needs:

_____

_____

_____

May we contact you for further help with the items listed below? If yes, please complete the information requested below:

16. Serve on an advisory committee ☐ Yes ☐ No
17. Placement of student in co-op/internship ☐ Yes ☐ No
18. Job placement of graduates ☐ Yes ☐ No
19. Participation in job fairs/other community events ☐ Yes ☐ No
20. Provide input about education/training needs for your workforce ☐ Yes ☐ No

Your Name:_____ Title:_____

Organization:_____ Telephone No:_____

_____

Mailing Address City State Zip

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AS 480 (01/96)

Appendix B. Employer Survey Overall Ratings of Technical and Performance Skills

Question Number	Excellent 10	9	Very Good 8	7	Good 6	5	Fair 4	3	Poor 2	1	N/A	Total Responded
1	33	19	24	6	7	2	1	-	-	-	-	92
	35.9%	**20.7%**	**26.1%**	**6.5%**	**7.6%**	**2.2%**	**1.1%**	-	-	-	-	**100.0%**
2	15	17	23	14	9	5	8	1	-	-	-	92
	16.3%	**18.5%**	**25.0%**	**15.2%**	**9.8%**	**5.4%**	**8.7%**	**1.1%**	-	-	-	**100.0%**
3	23	15	27	8	6	4	7	2	-	-	-	92
	25.0%	**16.3%**	**29.3%**	**8.7%**	**6.5%**	**4.3%**	**7.6%**	**2.2%**	-	-	-	**100.0%**
4	30	19	20	9	7	3	2	1	-	-	-	91
	33.0%	**20.9%**	**22.0%**	**9.9%**	**7.7%**	**3.3%**	**2.2%**	**1.1%**	-	-	-	**100.0%**
5	19	19	20	7	13	4	6	3	-	-	1	92
	20.7%	**20.7%**	**21.7%**	**7.6%**	**14.1%**	**4.3%**	**6.5%**	**3.3%**	-	-	**1.1%**	**100.0%**
6	34	14	16	8	9	8	1	1	1	-	-	92
	37.0%	**15.2%**	**17.4%**	**8.7%**	**9.8%**	**8.7%**	**1.1%**	**1.1%**	**1.1%**	-	-	**100.0%**
7	27	20	24	5	6	4	4	1	-	-	1	92
	29.3%	**21.7%**	**26.1%**	**5.4%**	**6.5%**	**4.3%**	**4.3%**	**1.1%**	-	-	**1.1%**	**100.0%**
8	20	18	21	12	9	5	5	2	-	-	-	92
	21.7%	**19.6%**	**22.8%**	**13.0%**	**9.8%**	**5.4%**	**5.4%**	**2.2%**	-	-	-	**100.0%**
9	16	12	21	11	6	7	4	1	-	-	11	89
	18.0%	**13.5%**	**23.6%**	**12.4%**	**6.7%**	**7.9%**	**4.5%**	**1.1%**	-	-	**12.4%**	**100.0%**